

## CLAIMS

1. A liquid filling method wherein a liquid is delivered from a storage tank into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said  
5 method being characterized in that the liquid in said filler tank is returned through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxed to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from said storage tank to  
10 said filler.
2. A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.
3. A liquid filling method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said refluxing is carried out during at least one  
15 of liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.
4. A liquid filling method wherein a liquid delivered from a storage tank is heat-sterilized before being delivered into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said method being  
20 characterized in that the liquid in said filler tank is returned through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxed to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from said storage tank to said  
25 filler, wherein the liquid flowing through said reflux path to said storage tank is cooled.
5. A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

6. A liquid filling method according to claim 4 or 5, wherein said refluxing is carried out during at least one of liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

7. A liquid filling method according to any one of  
5 claims 1 to 6, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said  
10 detecting device.

8. A liquid filling method according to claim 7, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during  
15 suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

9. A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line  
20 having a storage tank that stores the liquid and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein the liquid in a filler tank is returned through a return piping attached to the filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid constantly circulates throughout  
25 said liquid filling line.

10. A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

11. A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9 or 10, wherein said refluxing is carried out during at least one of liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

12. A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into  
5 containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line having a storage tank that stores the liquid, a heat sterilizer that heat-sterilizes said liquid, and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein the liquid in a filler tank is returned through return piping  
10 attached to said filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid circulates throughout said liquid filling line, said apparatus further including a cooling device that cools the liquid flowing through said reflux path.

15 13. A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

14. A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12 or 13, wherein said refluxing is carried out during at least  
20 one of liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

15. A liquid filling apparatus according to any one of claims 9 to 14, further including:

a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and

25 a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device.

16. A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 15.  
wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid  
supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of  
liquid returned from said filler tank, and during  
5 suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to  
said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned  
from said filler tank.